

2016/17 Proposed Urban Deer Reduction Plan

Cody Police Department

PURPOSE:

The City Of Cody has established an Urban Deer Task Force to consider ways to handle the deer population in the City of Cody.

As of September 17, 2016, Cody City Council, while considering the approval of a lethal reduction program to address the local urban deer population, has instructed the Cody Police Department to draft a preliminary operational plan, first year budget and to pursue the Chapter 56 permit from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

GOALS:

Urban deer reduction goals are identified as follows:

- 1) Maintain public safety while conducting deer reduction operations.
- 2) Reduce the urban deer population if determined appropriate by City Council, under the regulation of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.
- 3) Utilize effective, humane methods of lethal reduction.
- 4) Provide interested citizens with venison from harvested deer so they are not wasted.

PROCEDURES:

Legal Authority

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department manages wildlife in Wyoming. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department may issue Title 56 permits. The permit, if granted, would specify the number of deer to be taken in a given timeframe and list additional conditions and direction imposed by Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Police Function

The Cody Police Department would be utilized for the systematic lethal culling of urban deer (see method section for details).

Selected members of the Cody Police Department participating in the deer reduction program will be trained in the administrative procedures required and in firearms proficiency with the selected firearm and equipment.

Method

The Cody Police Department will utilize police officers trained in the administrative and operational procedures unique to this program, to shoot deer using weapons and at locations detailed below.

The basic process would involve using bait to lure deer into areas where they could be safely shot. The biological samples for Chronic Wasting Disease testing would be collected, and the deer will be donated to interested citizens for processing and consumption pending the outcome of CWD testing.

Training

Participating officers will complete training specific to this program. Topics will include administrative reporting requirements under the Chapter 56 Permit and as determined by the Cody Police Department, biological sampling for CWD testing, distribution of harvested deer to interested citizens, and firearms competency with the selected equipment.

Manpower

The Cody Police Department will utilize two officers at a time to harvest deer. The primary officer will operate the firearm, while the second will act as a safety officer. The role of the safety officer will be to maintain watch of the surrounding area and background as the first officer readies for the shot.

The Cody Police Department will utilize the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to assist with baiting operations, scouting/monitoring deer activity, and with establishing access to privately owned land as needed.

Site Selection

Keeping the goal of public safety in mind, the locations selected to harvest deer are of primary importance. The following are some considerations:

- Permission; sites will either be city owned land or on private land with the owner's permission (NOTE: deer will not be harvested on public roadways, or from any land that is not owned by the city of Cody without the permission of the landowner or their authorized agent).
- Background; sites will provide a clear/safe background to allow the use of firearms.
- Each site that is selected for the operation will have a day-time safety evaluation conducted by Police Department personnel. Operation plans will be developed for each selected location.
- Effectiveness; efforts will be made to identify and use sites in problem areas.

Equipment

The department will primarily utilize an AR 15 style rifle that is commonly issued as a patrol rifle. The department will use .223 caliber soft point ammunition, which has been found effective for this purpose.

The rifle will be suppressed to minimize the sound of gunshot(s) in city limits and to ensure discrete operations.

A low magnification optic will be utilized to aid with accurate shot placement.

If operations occur after dark, night vision or thermal imagers will be used by the safety officer to ensure there is a clear background and field of fire.

Public Safety

The Cody Police Department will not discount public safety in the name of reducing the urban deer population.

There is inherent risk in discharging firearms within city limits. Public safety will not be compromised. With proper site selection, day-time safety evaluations, the oversight of a safety officer, and ultimately the decision of the primary officer to discharge the firearm, public safety will be maintained.

Ethics

Taking the life of an animal is a serious matter. Every effort should be made to take only well placed, effective shots, so as to quickly and humanely dispatch the deer.

In the event that a deer is wounded, every effort will be made to follow up and recover the deer in a safe and humane manner.

Transportation

Officers will operate a vehicle marked with City of Cody emblems, or will operate the Cody Police Department's Code Enforcement truck. Harvested deer will be covered and out of the view of the public during transport.

Distribution of deer

Local citizens who are interested in taking possession of whole, non-field dressed harvested deer, and who agree to accept responsibility for processing, will be able to submit their name and contact information to the City Of Cody. Once a deer is harvested, interested citizens will be contacted to take possession of the deer.

Citizens will be required to complete and comply with an affidavit of informed consent regarding CWD testing, which requires they do not consume, or allow others to consume, venison from harvested deer until test results are available.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Testing

Once a deer is killed, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing will occur by collecting a biological sample from the deer, and submitting the sample to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for testing. Results are typically available within 3 days. The Cody Police Department will notify the participating recipient of the results. The deer will be disposed of if it tests positive for CWD, in compliance with the Informed Consent agreement.

Professional Processing

The Zero Box, a local processor, charges \$150.00 for processing field dressed, unskinned deer. The Zero Box commonly takes deer from private parties that pay for processing, but that want only to donate the venison. The processed venison (usually ground into burger) is distributed to those who are referred from the Cody Cupboard.

This should be a contingency option if no citizens are able to respond to take possession of harvested deer. This would require that Cody Police Officer(s) complete the field dressing of unclaimed deer, and coordinate storage of the deer until it could be transported to the Zero Box.

Disposal

If CWD test is positive, the deer and venison will be disposed of in accordance with the Informed Consent agreement.

A dumpster designated for the disposal of the entrails and non-consumable parts of the deer will be provided for the use of participating citizens, so as to limit the chance of improper disposal on nearby public lands or in local residential dumpsters.

Administrative Reporting

Each deer harvested will be tagged and documented in accordance with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Chapter 56 permit system.

Each harvested deer will be documented with a Cody Police Department form designed to record the details of each harvest.

A final, end of season report will be completed in compliance with the Chapter 56 Permit.

Overtime reports will be completed to document and track wages associated with the program.

Program Review, On-going Evaluation and Future Considerations

Review and monitoring of the program will be ongoing. Items of future consideration include;

- Cost per deer taken evaluation.
- Citizen Satisfaction survey.
- Partnering with faith based and non-profit organizations to process and donate harvested deer to those in need.
- Update Cody Web site and Cody PD Face Book with program detail and information.